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CS Historical Paper

No. 6

CLANDESTINE SERVICES HISTORY

THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

AND

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

23 October - 4 November 1956

VOLUME I OF II

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III

FIELD AND HEADQUARTERS ACTIVITY DURING THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

(23 October to 4 November 1956)

A. How the Crisis was met in Vienna

On 23 October there was no Hungarian Operations Section in the Vienna Station and there were no Hungarian speakers among the case officers in Vienna. On the agent-roster there was one Hungarian

[redacted] Before 23 October his activities were not directed towards (b)(1) (b)(3) the Hungarian target. During the months just previous to October 1956 only a small number of the total reports received by the agency on the intellectual and political ferment of Hungary originated in Vienna. At the outbreak of the revolution, the Vienna Station, in sum, was not facing in the direction of Hungary. On the Station RMD, the Hungarian target was relegated to the next lowest priority in a class with the other Balkan satellites, which were not properly EE targets. (A Hungarian Section was finally formed at the station on 11 December 1957; the RMD, putting Hungary in first priority, was revised at headquarters during December 1957.)

The period 23 October to 4 November, the only period under consideration here, was too short to effect a station reorganization to meet a crisis, whose exact nature, duration and final significance

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could not be rightly judged at any time during that period. To have taken time to reorganize would have meant to lose time from the job of finding out what was going on. Besides, during the original crisis there could be little concept of mission and objectives on which to base a reorganization. The station reacted to the suddenly fluid and frenetic circumstances of the situation the only way it could, which was by throwing everyone available into the job of covering the crisis on a hit-or-miss basis, somewhat the way a newspaper office does, when suddenly confronted with a catastrophic event. In this the station was sorely limited from the outset (or as soon as it became apparent that the border was opening up) by [redacted] prohibition on [redacted] visiting the border area. The only personnel who could be despatched to the border area were [redacted] of whom there were fortunately many in Vienna, [redacted]

(b)(1) (b)(3) (b)(1) (b)(3) (b)(1) (b)(3) (b)(1) (b)(3)

Since none of these except [redacted] spoke Hungarian, the first top-priority action was to move Hungarian-speaking [redacted] to Vienna. This was done with relative alacrity, considering that no plan for the use of such personnel previously existed and that the magnitude and outcome of the crisis was uncertain during the earliest days.

(b)(1) (b)(3)

[redacted]

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[redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

[redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

Vienna's only Hungarian speaker, [redacted] was naturally thrown full-ti (b)(1) (b)(3)
into the melee; [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

Altogether by 31 October Vienna had a pool of seven or so Hungarian speakers, [redacted] of (b)(1)
varying capabilities and past experience none of whom belonged to [redacted] (b)(3)1) (b)(3)
therefore could appear in the border (b)(1)
region -- these in addition to the non-Hungarian speaking [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)
personnel [redacted] who could also be used as the sta ion (b)(1) (b)(3)
pleased.

As far as can be ascertained, there was and could have been no plan for the specific operational deployment of this personnel, for the same reason that a general crisis-plan or reorganization within the station was impossible -- no one knew enough of what was happening to place personnel or assign tasks. The sole operating principle was to find out as much as possible and for this reason personnel were sent to the border areas and were spread out so that there was some coverage on an on-and-off basis of all points which had been reported open.

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There was no plan for personnel at different border points to get in touch with each other, i.e. there was no team. Each border visit was an independent probe, and the observer, in case of an operational opportunity or a piece of information, could either phone Vienna or return there to report.

In Vienna itself, Chief of Station succeeded, immediately after the scope of events in Hungary became apparent, in arranging for agency personnel to take over all off-hour duty [redacted] (nights, and (b)(1) (b)(3)
week-ends) on the assumption that by this arrangement [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)
would secure immediate and only access to the Hungarian freedom fighters [redacted] While this no (b)(1) (b)(3)
doubt seemed to be an excellent way to assure ourselves of maximum coverage in the face of the chaos of the moment, Vienna case officers later felt that it was an unnecessary measure which succeeded in exhausting the station personnel and in rendering them less efficient and vigorous for their strenuous daytime duties without substantial benefits. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) Add to this the fact that the already much reiterated lack of Hungarian speakers [redacted] made communication difficult (b)(1) (b)(3)
unless the Hungarian spoke German or unless an interpreter were pres This is mentioned in passing, since it is a good example of the kind

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of well-intentioned sacrifice and hardship which personnel is ready to undertake in time of crisis, but which accomplishes little and is no substitute for the management of those elements of the situation which really count.

Because no Hungarian section existed in the Vienna Station at the time the revolution broke out, because the Chief of Operations was new to the scene and because the day-to-day mission was never predictable, Chief of Station, Vienna appears to have functioned as captain of the troops. All case officers reported to him personally, the despatch of persons to the border was cleared through him, and the station functioned as a pool of activists each consulting in turn with Chief of Station, with little attempt made by 4 November to separate functions and delegate responsibilities, with the result that many potential activities, whatever their value, were lost in the shuffle. A typical instance is [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) who was told to stand by in his car for word to proceed to the border, but was however forgotten in the general excitement and spent (b)(1) (b)(3) the day standing by.

The fact that staff members [redacted] were prohibited (b)(1) (b)(3) from going to the border area was not so great a loss from the information-collection point-of-view (since they lacked the necessary language) but it complicated the management of the personnel who were despatched to the border, most of whom stood in need of daily guidance. Each time one of the latter returned to Vienna to meet with someone

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[redacted] it was necessary to make secure telephone (b)(1) (b)(3) contact, to lay on foolproof meeting-arrangements, to procure safehouses, etc. Had the staff members [redacted] been allowed to approach (b)(1) (b)(3) the border-area and set up field-posts as close to it as possible, they could have worked the border-operators more efficiently and could have let them stay at the border, i.e. the staff members should have done the commuting, not the few agents who could be useful at the border. Thus this prohibition undoubtedly contributed further to the complicated state of affairs within the station and to the already inherent difficulties of organizing personnel and operations efficiently.

While a few freedom fighters with worthwhile information were seen by our personnel in Vienna [redacted] the majority (b)(1) (b)(3) contacts with persons coming out of Hungary were made at the border. (We are not speaking of refugees here, very few of whom had begun to come out at the time in question, but of persons domiciled in or near the border regions who crossed into Austria for a variety of purposes connected with the revolutionary cause and returned to the scene as quickly as possible.) In focusing on the border-contact situation, which was the heart of our operations, it should be recalled that we were only one of many parties trying to work the border among hordes of Western observers, newsmen, Austrian welfare people, tourists, agents of other intelligence services, etc., etc., that there was therefore competition for news, that nothing prevented an excited Hungarian looking for contacts and assistance from talking to anyone besides ourselves and telling the same

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story he had told us, and above all, that there was no guarantee that one would ever see the same person twice. Much of what we picked up at the border on a one-time basis was good intelligence since it came from eye-witnesses. None of what we picked up was any better or any worse than what any good newsman could or did pick up, except that we had a central office in Vienna with a large staff who could try to put the pieces together, compare incoming information with radio, State Department and liaison material, etc., etc.

At no time in the period 23 October - 4 November, if one looks at the situation realistically, did we have anything that could or should have been mistaken for an intelligence operation. In the case of the few contacts from inside who promised to stay in touch with us (i.e. get in touch with us when they came out again) it was naturally impossible to guarantee either when the inside man could come out again, and worse, when our man could be found again at the same place although telephone numbers were given out. It was not likely, even had the man come out again and called the number and not been waylaid by some other party on the scene, that he would have waited around until somebody could come down to see him from Vienna. In any case, this would have been no way to run efficient operations at a time like this. As it turned out, although there were plans with some contacts from inside to meet again, no repeated meetings took place with the same person during the period 23 October to 4 November.

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During the period in question, personnel attached to the station and working in the border area had made contact with and picked up information from various persons from West Hungarian towns, many of whom claimed to be members of the local revolutionary councils or to have close contact to such. Most of these could give eyewitness accounts of the revolutionary take-over in their own and nearby communities, of the activity or lack of it of Soviet troops stationed in their region, of the political intentions of the revolution as seen from where they stood. In some cases (depending upon the date) they desired medical supplies or weapons or radio equipment. In some cases they had been sent out by their councils to give the news to the West. In the few outstanding cases they had reliable news from other sectors (received via [redacted] telegraph) particularly on new movements of Soviet troops into Hungary. What they did not have was any reliable news as to what was happening in Budapest, (and they were as anxious to find this out as we were.)

The information which came from these people made up the bulk of our cabled intelligence on the Hungarian revolution and, what is more interesting, directly or indirectly influenced policy and planning messages sent from Vienna to headquarters. (see below) The fact that we were not getting news from the storm center of the revolution at Budapest or on a country-wide basis meant not only that our intelligence was one-sided but also that much of our planning which was based on this intelligence, was one-sided.

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For the record, our main contacts were with people picked up at various border points from the following places: KOESZEG, SZENTGOTTHARD, SOPRON, GYÖR and VESZPREM. The 4-5 contacts in question here not only delivered hard intelligence but were all momentarily engaged with us in some operational plan (however impromptu) which involved future contact and action. The first three towns are all immediately adjacent to the Austrian border; Györ is about 50 kilometers from the border and Veszprem about 100 kilometers. These operational contacts, most of which took place between 30 October and 3 November, came up with the following propositions:

a. request for redios, and arms (if possible) (Györ, Sopron)

b. request that a powerful transmitter at the Austrian border rebroadcast and monitor resistance radios, so that each town would know what the other was doing (Györ)

c. return to Koeszeg and bring back member of district council.

d. send out trained signals man for briefing by us (Veszprem)

Although journalists from all over Europe streamed down to Budapest soon after the revolution broke out (and their reports were the only information received from there) it is noteworthy that in the period under consideration very few people came up from Budapest to the border or to Vienna, except for occasional truck drivers who had been sent for supplies and who were naturally in a great hurry to return. Everyone else in Budapest was much too busy or too keen on watching

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developments to bother about the outside world or even to bother to any extent about what was going on in other parts of Hungary. What little information on the massive and confused events in Budapest did trickle out via hurried truck drivers or official travelers was of little use. A typical instance took place on 30 October when two officers of the American Legation in Budapest arrived in Vienna and stated that at 1000 A.M. that morning, when they had left, there was no fighting in Budapest and all was quiet. A Hungarian truck driver who came out the same day stated that at 1000 A.M. there was fighting in various parts of the city and went on to describe some specific incidents.

During the period 26 October - 4 November two contract agents of the Agency did go into Hungary, both of them, [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) who took a spin around Hungary and came out and wrote an excellent report on what he had seen. He had no operational mission and little intelligence briefing, except of the most general sort. His experience showed how easy it was for someone, who had partial use of the language and sufficient courage and imagination, to get around even in chaotic times, and to make contacts without difficulty, especially under fair [redacted] The other was [redacted] who visited his mother in (b)(1) (b)(3) Hungary during the early days of the uprising and later went in again to [redacted] to see what was going on among the students who were playing (b)(1) (b)(3) a prominent part on the local revolutionary scene. He was still there when the Russians re-entered, but succeeded in returning to Austria safely.

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The issue of despatching trained personnel of many possible kinds into the revolutionary area is, of course, the key to the problem here under consideration and will be analyzed in great detail in a later section. Suffice it to say at this point, that the experience of our operations people at the border and of the few who went inside, and the whole picture we now have of the mentality of the revolutionaries shows that almost anyone from the West, of whatever nationality, color or purpose would have been received with open arms by any of the revolutionary councils in the cities of Hungary during the period in question.

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

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(b)(1)
(b)(3)

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(b)(1)
(b)(3)

The other of the two elements with which Vienna had to contend was the U.S. military. This is naturally a big subject, since the whole problem of agreed activities is behind it. There is no intention of analyzing it here. In principle one can say that if we were in no position to act efficiently and according to plan with well-placed assets on the spot, the military is, was, and always will be even worse off, if for no other reason than its inherent structural inability to maneuver rapidly in intelligence matters. In the instance under consideration a special situation obtained which I hope need never be considered again, if the Agency plans properly before the next crisis looms. The army

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(b)(1)
(b)(3)

The lesson learned during the Hungarian revolution is that if we do not have our own assets and our own plan, no one else's assets or intentions will serve us. On the negative side of the ledger, the responsibilities during a time of crisis, with or without a plan, are so great that all other parties, who are always going to want to get into the act, must be kept at arm's length from the main operating personnel of our bases, if their energies are not to be diverted from the main task. A single liaison officer with no other major responsibilities should be assigned liaison with the military in time of crisis to keep them happy and do for them or get out of them whatever is possible. There is no doubt that the time Chief of Station, Vienna had to waste on conferences with ranking military intelligence people during the Hungarian revolution was a sizeable additional drain on his already strained services to the rest of his station.

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B. Specific action and planning as the crisis developed: Vienna, headquarters, other stations.

The purpose of this section is to show, especially in the light of the foregoing, what were the chief observations, hopes and intentions of both Vienna and headquarters during the period 23 October to 4 November and on what these were based. The material which follows immediately below is taken almost entirely from cable traffic between Vienna and headquarters. The further purpose of this section is to compare or contrast, as the instance may warrant, what we were thinking and planning, or in some cases doing, with the true state of affairs, and to point up some of the opportunities for possible action which we might have taken, had we been differently informed and better organized. (In the items below certain statements are underlined which constitute the crucial points in field or headquarters thinking and which bear the brunt of later comment.)

Between 24 and 26 October headquarters sent three cables to Vienna, (one each day) asking for a report on the Hungarian situation, since Vienna had not been heard from throughout the opening phase of the crisis. On 27 October Vienna sent two cables which reported fully on the situation to date as far as it was known Previous to this they had had no information which was not likewise available in the U.S. through radio and newspapers, and had been engaged in marshalling their forces and attempting to orient themselves to a situation for which, as has already been pointed out, they were completely unprepared.

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Vienna's cables of 27 October informed headquarters of the
(IN 43436) various local arrangements mentioned in the previous section (off-hour
(IN 43640) duty [redacted] personnel, [redacted] restrictions on (b)(1) (b)(3)
personnel movement, etc., intention to despatch [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)
personnel to the border). They contained the information that the cities in Northern Hungary seemed to be in the hands of the rebels, who had taken over the local radio stations at Gyor and Miskolc. They further stated that Vienna would try to identify the leaders of the revolutionary action through operations at the border and asked for headquarters advice on what action the station should take, on U.S. policy, particularly in regard to sending arms and ammunition shipments into Hungary. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

In answer to this, headquarters replied briefly on the following
(OUT 96191) day, 28 October, that we must restrict ourselves to information collection only, that agents sent to the border must not get involved in anything that would reveal U.S. interest or give cause to claim intervention, that Vienna should try to get the identities of activists, and that there might be the possibility of passing in radio equipment a little later.

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IN 43817) On 29 October Vienna had no new plans or thoughts but observed that the revolution, judging by border reports and broadcasts from the border towns, was tending far from communism. The Station also deplored the lack of action or the taking of any stand on the part of the U.S. Government.

OUT 37295) Headquarters on 29 October gave further answer to Vienna's cable of 27 October emphasizing the need to find out about leading personalities in the revolution and stating that the idea of using [redacted] for suppo (b)(1) (b)(3) to resistance elements inside Hungary was good but that it was not permitted to send U.S. weapons in. (At this date no one had checked precisely on the exact location and nature of U.S. or other weapons available to CIA. This was done finally in early December.) Headquarters said further that it was reviewing the rosters of dropped agents from old illegal operations who had had W/T training who were located both in Europe and in the U.S.A. (Among others, headquarters attempted to find the exact address of a former [redacted] agent who had been resettled (b)(1) (b)(3) it was thought, [redacted] This was a little like the scene (b)(1) (b)(3) in an old comedy where in the frantic search for a missing person, people begin to ransack the bureau drawers.)

By 30 October Vienna had begun to collect and transmit some of the intelligence garnered from border contacts described in the foregoing section. On the basis of this and other material available in Vienna, broadcasts of local rebel radios and rumors trickling up from Budapest, (IN 44718) Vienna sent two think-pieces on 30 October and 31 October which deplored (IN 44759)

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the lack of unified leadership in the revolution, debated whether the Soviets would or would not interfere with what was going on in Hungary, stated that the revolution was losing momentum, that Imre Nagy was discredited as a future leader and proposed that a national leader must come forth around whom the whole revolutionary movement and its gains could be solidified. Vienna warily suggested that [redacted] might be (b)(1) (b)(3) the right man and raised the question of getting in touch with him. Vienna further pointed out that the Northern Hungarian border cities represented a more or less unified bloc in their demands and in their disagreements with Budapest, but were not really unified otherwise (i.e. organizationally).

By this date (31 October) Imre Nagy had publicly announced the formation of a cabinet to include the leaders of the most prominent outlawed Hungarian political parties, and each of these leaders had already (30 October) spoken over the Budapest radio to announce the re-formation of his party: Tildy (Smallholders), Erdei (Peasants). Bela Kovacs did not speak on the radio but was interviewed by a reporter in Pecs, which was written up in the Hungarian papers on 31 October. By this time also the news had come out in Budapest that Hegedus and not Imre Nagy had called in the Russians the first time, and that Nagy was daily gaining in stature and was acceding in giant steps to the increasingly radical demands of the various councils and committees who were sending representatives to him. Mindszenty had been released and had already made a public statement. At the same time the first ominous-sounding reports of the apparent re-entry of fresh Soviet troops on Hungarian soil were being received.7

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IN 45022) On the same date as the second of these two think-pieces (31 October), Vienna sent another cable obviously based on information and requests picked up from a border contact, which emphasized the lack of communications between free cities in North Hungary and proposed that a transmitter be brought up to the border to rebroadcast the transmissions of the radio stations in revolutionary hands so that by this means they could stay in touch with each other. This notion obviously suggested a topic which Vienna had raised earlier and which it now reiterated more specifically in the form of a proposal to send in RS-6's for rebel use so that we could be kept informed of the latest developments from the centers of action. Vienna pointed out here for the first time that its only information came from travellers, border contacts and the press. Vienna stated it was screening border contacts for use as W/T operators and requested policy clearance, and dispatch to Vienna of signal plans and of a W/T trainer.

UT 97127) On the same date (31 October) a cable from headquarters crossed the above Vienna cables and was concerned chiefly with the frantic attempt to create communications with people inside Hungary. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

Headquarters also seconded a scheme which had shortly before come out of Frankfurt and which proposed that certain defectors [redacted] who had volunteered to go back into Hungary be allowed to go, especially those with W/T experience. In this same vein, headquarters suggested that (b)(1) (b)(3)

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Vienna screen their contacts to the rebels for possible W/T types.

By 1 and 2 November, while events were actually moving in many disparate directions at once, the world, for that short period, was given the impression that the Hungarian Revolution was over and had succeeded in its major aims. Nagy had made his declaration of neutrality, he was negotiating with the Russians for the withdrawal of troops, etc., etc. This breath-taking and undreamed-of state of affairs not only caught many Hungarians off guard, it also caught us off-guard, for which we can hardly be blamed since we had no inside information, little outside information, and could not read the Russians' minds.

On 1 November Vienna, in its main cable of that day, took up the problem of new relations with the kind of government which might now come forth in Hungary and considered at some length the necessary revision, in the light of recent events, of the Agency's whole program for the European satellites. On the same day, headquarters, which had not quite settled down to the new Hungary, was collecting and restating objectives in its daily cable to Vienna: collect intelligence, use the fluid border situation to lay on support mechanisms for future operations, [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) [redacted] establish contact with rebel leaders in the interior, closing with (b)(1) the usual ukase: BUT NOTHING MUST HAPPEN WHICH WOULD JUSTIFY CHARGE OF (b)(3) INTERVENTION.

During the few remaining days (1-4 November) of partial euphoria over the unexpected accomplishments of a revolutionary mob and partial confusion over reports that the Russians were agreeing to leave on the one hand

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and sending in fresh troops on the other, the major Vienna cable traffic was directed to [redacted] rather than to headquarters and was concerned with (b)(1) (b)(3) proposals for the setting up of a coalition government for Hungary, and with the position and disposition of Ferenc Nagy who was at that time in Paris trying to get into Austria.

There is no serious warning in Vienna cables of these days as to the imminence of the second Russian intervention, although certain reports transmitted by Vienna gave clear indication of what might be coming. Station personnel reported verbally at a later date that until the night of 3 November none of their contacts had predicted this intervention. On that night one border contact stated his conviction that the Russians were ready to attack. By early morning of 4 November this was already a fact and was known to the world. On 4 November headquarters cabled Vienna that it should try to line up escaping resistance leaders for appearance before the UN, and that measures would be taken to hasten the entry of such into the U.S. On 6 November we were already talking about the mechanics and methods of exploiting refugees. And that was that.

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C. Reporting during the Hungarian Revolution

A listing and analysis of sources of reports on the Hungarian situation during the period covered by this paper (23 October to 4 November) shows at a glance the relative uselessness of conventional clandestine sources as against unusual and unconventional sources in a crisis period.

Main sources used by Vienna:

1. Freedom fighters, revolutionary council members, etc., coming to the border (in a few instances to Vienna). These constituted the most numerous and in most cases most reliable sources for the areas in question.

2. [redacted] For the most part [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) inform came likewise from border contacts and therefore represented further coverage of the kind received under 1 above. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) was obviously capable of wider and easier access to such sources than we were. For further special [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) coverage, see below.

3. Other [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) persons or organizations using the same [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) ods and contacts as ourselves (border contact) but having the advantage of being on home territory and having legitimate reason for closer contact than we did. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

4. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) (Many persons engaged in official action and also volunteer [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3), managed to enter and leave Hungary without difficulty during the period in question. By chance, chiefly, we were able to talk to a few such at the border.)

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Travellers (legal): diplomats, (American and other), journalist (American and other). These were the people who went down to and came out from Budapest. We had next to no contacts to the journalists, but some to American diplomats who came out.

Secondary sources:

1. Hungarian Railroad station personnel using teletype. Hungarian railroaders all over the country, without any apparent organizational direction, but simply on their own initiative, teletyped information, especially on Russian troop movements and local hostilities, in round-robin fashion to various revolutionary centers and in so doing inadvertantly constituted the one systematic combination of intelligence observer and communications facility available during the whole period. Some of the people we talked to at the border brought with them reports received in their towns via railroad teletype from other areas. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) likewise picked up numerous reports received in this manner.

2. [redacted] monitoring of Soviet troop units. [redacted] was (b)(1) (b)(3) monitoring Soviet [redacted] in Hungary. The latter in their (b)(1) (b)(3) haste and disorganization frequently [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) [redacted] and thus revealed movements, positions, morale, etc. (b)(1) (b)(3) The major collection of such material took place, however, chiefly after 4 November.

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Reporting sources used in other areas:

1. RFE - Munich - RFE with its highly efficient and technically superb radio-monitoring service was able to pick up, record and analyze and quickly put into reporting channels the material broadcast by the various rebel radio stations. For the record, it should be stated that this was the only source of intelligence reports put out by RFE during the time of the revolution proper. (RFE also rebroadcast the transmissions it had picked up in an attempt to keep the various disconnected components of the Revolution informed, a service which some of the people who came to the border from Győr had requested and which was the subject of one Vienna cable.) (see III B) However, RFE needed no prompting to do this. While the reports put out on the basis of radio monitoring were of value in Washington and were in many instances cabled to Vienna, it is clear that our competence to judge the course of the revolution and to plan expeditious and alacritous moves would have been greatly advanced if the radio-monitoring capability had been in the same hands as the operational capability, namely in Vienna.

2. Liaison: In a time of crisis neutrals play or can play, as in time of war, a most outstanding part as reporting sources in that their political neutrality and their traditional engagement in welfare and medical actions allows them to remain on the scene, more or less respected and needed by both sides during hostilities.

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It is no surprise that during the crisis period reports came to us from both [redacted] both through their diplomat (b)(1) (b)(3) and [redacted] organizations, and more or less unsolicited. While (b)(1) (b)(3) the reports themselves, in the large melee of information accruing from all sides during the Hungarian revolution, were of no great importance, they point up the potential of such liaison sources and the fact that an action plan for crisis-periods should call for the attempt at least in neutral countries for the local station to put all possible pressure on liaison for reports from the disturbed area, which in many cases will be less biased than those coming in from partipants in an insurrection, and cooler and less hysterical then those from Western diplomats and journalists.

3. [redacted] Their coverage was negligible and as shown in (b)(1) (b)(3) [redacted] they were in the same position as ourselves as a result (b)(1) (b)(3) of the lack of previous planning. Their few representatives in [redacted] contributed correspondingly less information than our own. (b)(1) (b)(3)

[redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

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with a radio and for a time managed to send out eyewitness reports of the situation in Budapest. (This kind of action will be further discussed in Section IV.)

4. Reporting from Budapest itself consisted of telegrams from the American Legation (which was interrupted for a considerable period during the most exciting days at the end of the revolutionary period by a communications failure), reports from journalists, American, British and other, and reports from persons going from Budapest to Vienna. The latter for reasons already put forth, were of little value. Between the American Legation and the journalists, the latter understandably take the prize, although in many instances the receipt of their reports was delayed. While both Legation personnel and journalists braved the city fighting to find out what was going on, the latter did and could do something of great importance which was denied the former and that was to see and interview all kinds of persons taking part in the revolution, from freedom fighters on the streets to rebel leaders and politicians. Some persons actively engaged in the revolution did come into the American Legation and tell their stories, but these were naturally not of our choosing and in many cases were justifiably open to some suspicion. Reporting from the American Legation was at best sporadic and laced with premature analysis and assumptions (of the sort that diplomats feel their government stands in need of).

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(b)(1)
(b)(3)

However, even if the coverage of the American Legation had been a hundred times better than it was, future planning for crisis can and should not by any means include the American diplomatic installation as a base-point, since it will always be impossible to predict what the situation of that Mission will be, what its chief officer will impose upon his subordinates, etc.

5. Other sources:

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the case. It was noted during the Poznan uprisings, which in no way disrupted the basic function of the central government of Poland, that the Foreign Office staff was either much too busy trying to figure out what was going on and what stand the government was going to take, or simply saw no reason to brief its bureaucrats in foreign places. Whichever, certain Polish foreign installations had little to go on but the same rumors everyone else in the outside world was receiving. While it was interesting to note what stand the various diplomatic officers took towards the events at home, (for the sake of possible future approaches and the like) this did not constitute intelligence on the situation at home. During the Hungarian crisis the Foreign Ministry was severely disrupted and was for long periods of time in no physical communication with its installations, or when it was, had little time to give news reports on events.

(b)(1)
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During any widespread insurrection it would seem logical to expect this generally to be the case, and there is some question whether such reports, usually of disproportionate length (station analyses tending to fill the information-gaps) should be permitted to have priority precedence and clog up communication channels to the detriment of the expedient passage of other more urgent information.

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The break-down of significant subject-matter on the Hungarian revolution can be expressed as follows:

1. Progress of revolutionary fighting.

   a. Budapest

   b. Provinces

2. Consolidation of the revolution in political and governmental measures.

   a. Budapest

   b. Provinces

3. Warning of and progress of the second Russian intervention.

Our station in Vienna can be credited with having picked up a fair view of 1-b and 2-b above, all dealing with the provinces. They did not realize the degree of latent and in some cases actual working solidarity which had come about in some Transdanubian areas in a miraculously short time or the relation between these areas and Budapest, e.g., that the province of Borsod had sent a delegation to Imre Nagy to see whether he would accept their demands. He did, and they agreed to drop any ideas of an independent government. They had no solid information on either 1-a or 2-a (Budapest) except for the generally confused material belatedly trickling out. Their views on the Hungarian revolution, their reporting on it, the actions they proposed and their whole posture during this period was influenced by certain chance contacts with persons from the border towns. As for 3, it can be said that no one in Hungary or elsewhere

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(except perhaps the Russians themselves) had a clear composite view of the movements of Russian troops which were gradually deploying into positions of attack and siege all over Hungary. At many points, especially Miskolc, where the most blatant and courageous of the free revolutionary radios was located, the coming treachery of the Russians seemed to be foreseen. All in all, there were many isolated indications and many cries for help in advance of the need. While Vienna only picked up a few such reports, these happened to be among the most clearly indicative of what was likely to come and were based on eyewitness observation and sent by reliable communications. As early as 29 October an [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) working with [redacted] told [redacted] who (b)(1) (b)(3) passed it on to us, that a radio operation in Sopron (near the border) reported he had picked up the rebel radio at Nyiregyhaza (Northeast Hungary) calling for help against the Third Soviet Army which had crossed the Soviet/Hungarian border at 0123 hours on 29 October at Zahony. (Nota bene: We picked this up fourth-hand. Good radio monitoring by a unit in Vienna could have picked up a broadcast from Nyiregyhaza as easily as some one in Sopron could, which is even farther West than Vienna.) On 30 and 31 October revolutionaries from Gyor reported to [redacted] at the border (b)(3) (b)(1) (b)(3) extensive information on Russian military movements in the Northeast corridor of Hungary (Zahony-Nyiregyhaza) which had been received at Gyor via the railway teletype system from the stationmaster

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at ZAHONY, NYIREGYHAZA, and other towns in that area. These described in exact numbers and exact directions the movements of Russian troops, leaving little doubt of what was about to happen. To have believed at the time of these reports that the Russians were merely safeguarding their lines or preparing to aid the evacuation of their previously damaged troops and material seems now, on looking back, the extreme of wishful blindness. In the days following these reports we were, however, dickering in rather long cables [redacted] on the proposed make-up of a coalition government and were revising our program for the satellites. (b)(1) (b)(3)

In summary, our reporting was good on local events in West Hungary, and on the atmosphere and make-up of the local Revolutionary councils in that area. We knew little of what was happening in Budapest or of the encircling movements of Soviet troops and we had no composite picture of the status of the Revolution in the period between its first victory and its suppression by the Russians. We did not have the kind of information on which quick deft moves of our own could have been based, either in the nature of support to the Revolution or of improved intelligence coverage.

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